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Issue of Gas Masks

1. During the period 17 April to 20 May 1952, American-made gas masks were issued through North Korean medical channels to the commanders¹ of each North Korean battalion, company, and platoon in combat areas in North Korea, with first priority being given to the units actually on the front. These gas masks were originally captured by the Chinese Communist army from the Chinese Nationalists. A "US" was stamped on the top of each mask.
2. On 5 April 1952, Japanese-made gas masks² were distributed to some members of the 3 Battalion, 559 Regiment, 187 Division, 63 Army, Chinese Communist Army, at Taedok-san (approximately 126-44, 37-59) (CT-012067). On 20 April, the rest of the men in this unit were issued American-made gas masks.

Statements on Chemical Warfare

3. The chief of staff of the North Korean I Corps stated on 4 May 1952 at a I Corps battalion commanders conference, that "United Nation forces have started poison gas warfare." He said: "Recently, gas was used against the Chinese Communist army on the central front, and will be used on the eastern front. It is necessary, therefore, for every officer and soldier to be fully prepared. General headquarters will supply every fighting man on the line with a gas mask in the near future."
4. The commander of the 47 Division, North Korean I Corps, gave the following instructions on 6 May 1952: "In the event of gas attacks, all personnel

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should keep away from the affected area, and immediately request from higher headquarters the necessary directions for coping with the situation. Presently, United Nations forces are using a large number of gas shells against Chinese Communist soldiers on the central front; it is highly probable that they will bring the shells to the eastern front where the 47 Division is stationed. Therefore, all officers and soldiers should be sufficiently instructed to enable them to cope with gas warfare."

Instruction on Defense

5. By 20 May, no substantial training had been given for defense against gas attack, but North Korean battalion commanders had issued the following instructions: When attacked by gas, a person should immediately hold his breath and put on the gas mask. After the mask has been securely fastened, exhale and then take a deep breath. A person who does not possess a gas mask at the time of an attack should cover his nose and mouth with a handkerchief, cap, or any strip of cloth soaked in water and soap, and then run in the direction from which the wind is blowing. If none of the articles described above are available, a person should hold his breath and run in the direction from which the wind is blowing.

25X1 1. [] Comment. Presumably for issue to troops under their command.

25X1 2. [] Comment. [] reported the issue of Japanese-

25X1 made gas masks and gas masks with English markings to Chinese Communist troops during April and May 1952.

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